PEACE CORPS
volunteer
JULY 1969

His Imperial Majesty, the Shananshah, and Blatchford discuss their mutual interest in volunteer programs in Iran and around the world.

Volunteers size up **new ideas, new director**

Picking Kenya, Libya and Iran from the dozen or so countries considered, Director Joe Blatchford made his first overseas trip to Peace Corps sites.

His experience in Latin America since 1960 (as head of the development program ACCION) ruled out the need to go there at this time. He wanted to see a successful program in Africa; and Kenya, with many highly skilled Volunteers in diverse assignments, seemed to fit the bill. On the same continent yet vastly different is the program in Libya, where the 175 Volunteers have signed individual contracts with the Ministry of Education to teach English and receive all their financial support from the Libyan government. He then chose Iran, which has a number of sophisticated urban Volunteer assignments and where he wished to discuss a proposal advanced by the Shah of Iran to form an international volunteer service corps.

He was accompanied for the two weeks in mid-May by his wife, Winifred; George Zabokrtsky, trip coordinator and Peace Corps Kenya desk officer in Washington; Joan Larson, Peace Corps photographer; and Jerry Brady and Barbara Kraus, both special assistants to the director.

Blatchford arrived in Kenya with many of the Volunteers being unaware of his visit. In letters to THE VOLUNTEER, correspondents James Kushner and Berne Ellenson wrote that their knowledge of his trip was gained through the local press. Later, Ellenson explained that arrangements had been made on short notice and that Blatchford experienced "as close to the real thing as possible, since once in the field the director's party encountered broken vehicles, long delays and missed connections. Fortunately, he was able to meet a cross-section of the 283 Volunteers who serve here, mostly in secondary education, nurses' training, land settlement and water development."

In a press conference in Nairobi, Blatchford supported proposals for a reverse Peace Corps, saying "the easing of world social ills must be a two-way street." The Minister for Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, Bruce McKenzie, has proposed that some Kenya secondary school students might go to America to assist in such projects as Head Start and VISTA.

Blatchford also had private discussions with the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Mbiyu Koinange, and the Minister for Natural Resources, Jeremiah Nyagah. He had asked to

see Kenya's President, Jomo Kenyatta, but no meeting was arranged.

Blatchford said Kenyan officials told him that the Peace Corps had served very well, but there was now a need for more mature and highly skilled people on some projects, rather than people just out of college. He said the officials had expressed willingness to accept Volunteers with families, a departure from current practice which he favors, in order to get skilled blue collar workers and professionals in mid-career.

He was asked by Volunteers if that meant the Peace Corps would abandon the concept of young, unsophisticated Americans getting close to the people they are working with. He told them that such idealism will not be lost, that there is still an enormous need for the generalists. "But the Peace Corps itself has matured," he explained. "It can start looking now for more mature, more highly skilled people to help in development."

In contrast, Blatchford was anxiously awaited by Volunteers in Libya, but as correspondents Patrick Hilliard and Victor Gramigna reported, "the trip left us with mixed emotions."

"The youthfulness and vibrancy that the new director radiated gave hope to Volunteers, but the rapidity of his visit and lack of information on both sides left many disappointed," they said.

Continuing from the correspondents' report: "Several times during the course of those days, the new director met with a cross-section of Volunteers. There was a meeting at the country director's home, a trip to Tarhuna for a Libyan meal at the home of one of our married couples in the company of approximately 15 Volunteers, a trip to Homs among the ruins of ancient Leptis Magna and a final Volunteer meeting at Sabratha, another antiquity of Tripolitania. Mrs. Blatchford visited the Cyrenaica side of Libya.

"Blatchford's ideas on Peace Corps housekeeping, such as no travel restrictions and greater individual Volunteer responsibility, met with approval. Since Peace Corps Libya is in this binational set-up, the Volunteers deal mainly with Libyan bureaucracy, not Peace Corps bureaucracy; so the Volunteer here is pretty much responsible for himself already."

Calling this trip a publicity build-up, the correspondents said, "It was perhaps too early. Blatchford just didn't know enough about Libya except that it was supposedly the 'ultimate model of binationalism'. There is much dissatisfaction here. Enthusiasm for Libya or any Volunteer spirit is almost nonexistent, but we felt the director left here without really understanding that."

The high point of the journey was Blatchford's meeting in Iran with His Imperial Majesty, the Shahanshah, with whom he shared an interest in promoting the cause of volunteer service around the world. (Last December, the UN General Assembly voted to study the feasibility of creating an international volunteer corps, a plan proposed by Iran and co-sponsored by Pakistan and Greece.) Blatchford also talked of bringing Iranians to the U.S. "to teach and work on urgent social problems."

Additionally, he discussed with the Shah the Iran policy of national service as a means of satisfying a military or national obligation. Iran's high school graduates are conscripted into service for a specified time where they are channeled into the army, the health corps, agricultural corps or literacy corps. Blatchford said he will discuss Iran's example with President Nixon "who has asked me to make recommendations concerning national service in our country."

At a press conference in Peace Corps headquarters in Tehran, Blatchford said, "I am satisfied that the

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ON THE COVER: Volunteer teachers talk with Joe Blatchford (far left) at the ruins of Leptis Magna during the director's trip to Libya. This photo and others of trip by Joan Larson.

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In Tehran Volunteers and Mr. and Mrs. Blatchford get together over coffee at the Iran-America Cultural Center.

Peace Corps program in Iran is excellent. The government officials with whom I have met join me in this judgment." (Prime Minister Amir Abbas Hoveyda asked for more Volunteers to reinforce the 236 already serving in Iran, mainly in English, municipal engineering, agriculture and nursing.)

Mike Sarka, Iran correspondent to THE VOLUNTEER, reported that on his first day in the country Blatchford met a gathering of 53 Volunteers in the morning; Volunteer architects, city planners, economists and engineers in the afternoon, and 20 more at an evening meal in the home of several Volunteers.

Sarka accompanied the director's party and said that in general the meetings were "a healthy exchange of ideas. Both sides respected the frankness of the talk and the interest in new and untried plans. They found the Nixon appointee very interested in them with a great desire to communicate and learn from them. They found they could talk to him 'just like a field officer and not like the big cheese from Washington. He is a breath of fresh air, something the Peace Corps has needed for a long time,' one Volunteer remarked.

"The following day when Blatchford met with government officials in Tehran, his wife visited the Volunteers who work in the school for the blind and the school for the deaf, four who play for the Tehran Symphony Orchestra and four Volunteer secretaries.

"One Volunteer complained to the director that some of his peers who don't like their jobs, who aren't skilled for them and are pulling down the quality of the program are allowed to stay on because of their language ability or good social relations with host country nationals. The Volunteer speaking wanted such people to drop out. In answer, Blatchford informally suggested a possible three-year program combining choices of returning home after one year in country or working at a progression of different level jobs. Many of the collected Volunteers thought this might have merit and encouraged its inception as a test program."

Thus, Sarka reported, "Blatchford made a good impression on those Volunteers he saw. However, there are many more he must impress by his actions and plans in the coming months."

By Blatchford's own tally, he traveled 19,000 miles, seeing 350 Volunteers in all, 15 ministers and one head of state.

Volunteer Sylvia Long, right, teaches student nurses at the Eastern Provincial Hospital in Machakos, Kenya. She takes the Blatchfords through one of the hospital wards.

The Blatchfords hear Volunteer Oliver Johnson explain his work as a corrective therapist assistant in the Children's Orthopedic Clinic in Nairobi, Kenya.

Volunteer Rick Graham shows the director around Kajiado Secondary School where he teaches science and biology to Kenyan students.

Volunteer teachers and a Libyan neighbor show Blatchford the sights around Tarhuna.

New policies
untie some apron strings

In his first official action as Peace Corps director, Joe Blatchford culminated several weeks of study of Volunteer support services by eliminating some of the services, changing others, and consolidating several.

In a memorandum to country directors which outlined the changes, Blatchford said, "The decisions reached affect a number of services to the Volunteers which in actuality are restrictions on the Volunteers' freedom to manage their own affairs.

"The decisions are in keeping with the philosophy that we will eliminate all activities which do not directly promote the Volunteers' ability to satisfy their responsibility to the host countries," he said.

The policies changed include a range of services, from the handling of baggage to the handling of some early terminations. Many of the changes grew out of proposals made by a small Washington committee appointed by former director Jack Vaughn early in the year to study "paternalism" in the Peace Corps. The concept of individual Volunteer responsibility stressed by that committee appealed to the new director, who consulted for several weeks with a wider range of staff members at Peace Corps headquarters and then sought initial overseas reaction to the proposed changes. Requested to reply within a week, most country directors cabled "yes or no" responses; some polled Volunteer opinion.

In his memorandum, Blatchford called the field responses "prompt and incisive," and said they had been "of great assistance in making judgments on the proposals and have given increased confidence in the directions we are taking."

Below is a listing of the services eliminated, consolidated and changed, with brief explanations from the director's memorandum and from a recently revised addition to the Peace Corps Handbook. Most of the new policies will be applied beginning with Volunteers who enter training this summer.

Eliminated:

■ *Booklockers.* The need for providing a source of reading materials varies from country to country... Living allowances should enable Volunteers to purchase reading matter of their own selection.

■ *Pre-service clothing allowance.* Since experience has shown that trainees seldom need to supplement their existing wardrobes for overseas service, the Peace Corps will no longer make an initial lump-sum payment (formerly $85) for clothing at the end of training.

■ *Unaccompanied air freight and footlockers.* Each Volunteer will be responsible for overseeing the packaging and transportation of his own accompanying baggage. Peace Corps will pay for 36 pounds over the standard international baggage allowance (44 pounds). In the case of projects where Volunteers are required to take extensive job-related books or other supplies and equipment, an additional 15 pounds may be authorized. (Formerly, a Volunteer was allowed 115 pounds unaccompanied air freight in addition to the 44 pounds he carried with him.)

■ *Restrictions on travel to Western Europe and U.S.* In principle, the Peace Corps still believes that it is to the Volunteer's advantage, and to the advantage of the relationship he must maintain with his host country workers, to vacation within his assigned country or region. At the same time, the restriction on travel to countries such as the U.S. and Europe is undesirable because it discourages Volunteers from assuming full responsibility for important personal decisions relating to Peace Corps service... Volunteers should, to the greatest extent possible, conform to the leave policies of the host country agency with which they work.... Volunteers will inform country directors of their travel plans so that Peace Corps may be prepared to handle personal emergencies.

Consolidated:

■ *A single monthly living allowance* to include: the in-country clothing allowance, expenses for ordinary local travel (reasonable medical and dental and job-related), job-related supplies and vacation leave pay. The amounts of allowances formerly paid in lump-sums will be decided upon in country and prorated to be built into the single monthly payment; for example, two days' leave pay will be added to the monthly living allowance. In this way, Volunteers can handle their own funds and establish their own priorities for using their money. The Peace Corps will continue to provide an initial "settling-in" allowance so new Volunteers may furnish their living quarters. It will be adjusted to include funds for some household items and vehicles previously provided by Peace Corps.

Changed:

■ *Return transportation of early terminating Volunteers.* A new category, "termination for the convenience of the Peace Corps," has been added to the rules which govern payment of return transportation for early terminees. This category will include Volunteers who do not or cannot perform well enough to justify their continued presence in the host country, and will also include those who are dismissed because their active misbehavior or violation of Peace Corps policies and regulations makes their continued presence undesirable. It will not include those who resign without a reason which satisfies one of the existing Peace Corps criteria on early termination. All "convenience of the Peace Corps" terminees will receive transportation at Peace Corps expense if

they return directly and immediately to the U.S., and they will have the right to appeal to the director.

The revised policies provide for exceptions to the rule in practically every case. Blatchford said, "We must retain the flexibility to respond to specific local problems; thus, we have provided for local options wherever these seemed necessary."

Some of the local options:

■ A single monthly living allowance *except* in countries where currency exchange regulations, frequent value fluctuations or lack of banking facilities for safekeeping of funds makes consolidation of in-country payments impossible.

■ No booklockers *except* in instances where some further assistance is clearly necessary.

■ An 80 to 95-pound baggage limit *except* when climatic or other extraordinary conditions require a higher overall limit.

■ No travel restrictions *except* when country directors believe that program reasons require a restriction on travel to one or more countries. All requests for exceptions must be presented to the director.

The new category under which early terminating Volunteers may—or may not—have their return transportation paid is probably one of the least defined, and most controversial, of the changes. In his memorandum, Blatchford called the issue "perhaps the most difficult to resolve."

"All were in favor of changing the present policy," he said, "and an eloquent minority favored paying the return transportation of all Volunteers. I am impressed with this view but believe we should now take one significant step in this direction." Thus, the new category.

The debate marked one more round on the subject of whether the Peace Corps should pay return transportation for all early terminating Volunteers. The agency has been discussing the pros and cons of such a policy since a task force appointed to study the question recommended in the spring of 1967 that all early terminees receive a free ticket home.

Their recommendations were not acted upon until September, 1968, when the policy governing transportation payment for early terminees was revised to include payment for Volunteers who resigned because they had no "viable job" or for other reasons judged beyond their control.

Peace Corps asks **$101.1 million** *for FY 1970*

The Peace Corps has submitted to Congress its proposed budget for fiscal year 1970, which begins July 1. For the first time in its history, the agency is requesting less money than the previous year.

The FY '70 budget request is $101.1 million, $900,000 less than the Peace Corps was allotted in FY '69 and $11.7 million less than the agency had originally requested last fiscal year.

Director Joe Blatchford reported to Congress that the proposed budget would support an estimated strength of 12,000 Volunteers and trainees in 1970. It provides for 7,500 trainees, an increase of 500 over this year.

Despite the projected increase in trainees, the agency's Congressional Presentation reports the budget request is lower than last year for three reasons:

■ Fewer persons (7,000 rather than the projected 8,500) have been trained during 1969.

■ Fewer trainees during 1969 means fewer Volunteers overseas in 1970. (The FY '69 and '70 figures for Volunteers overseas are cited as 10,450 and 9,432 respectively.)

■ Cost reductions have helped decrease the budget, including prospective trainees paying for their own dental work, fewer vehicles overseas, greater use of in-country training, and fewer physicians and U.S. staff assigned overseas.

Also included in the Congressional Presentation:

—By the end of June (after eight years), the Peace Corps will have spent $672 million and sent almost 40,000 Volunteers overseas, 30,000 of whom have returned from 65 countries.

—Education continues to be the major task of the Peace Corps, occupying more than half of all Volunteers. Community development involves more than one out of every five Volunteers; agriculture and health programs follow, claiming about one out of every ten Volunteers.

—The Peace Corps spends its money on five major functions. For FY '70 the projected $101.1 million will be divided as follows: $33.7 million for overseas program costs, $30.6 million for administrative expenses, $25.9 million for training, $10.5 million for readjustment allowances, and $.5 million for miscellaneous.

—The average Volunteer will cost more in FY '70 than he did this year: $8,505 compared to $8,305. The cost includes everything from pre-selection expenses to readjustment allowances. As the number of Volunteers declines, the cost per capita goes up. Other factors figured into the higher cost are health care, continual federal salary increases, and mandatory administrative payments.

—The FY '70 budget contains an allotment of $3.8 million for Civil Service background investigations of prospective trainees. The figure is based on an estimate of 8,625 investigations at $450 each.

—During FY '69 and FY '70, the Peace Corps will have paid $115 per Volunteer per year of service for job-related travel in country. Also during those fiscal years, the Peace Corps will have paid $70 per Volunteer per year of service on supplies and equipment used on the job.

—Even medical kits have figured in cost reductions. The Congressional Presentation reports that the plastic containers which have been used for the past year cost $5 apiece less than the old, metal kits. And Medical says that doctors overseas no longer have "closetsful of metal containers in need of scraping, cleaning and painting."

Lesotho

My mother Lesotho is an independent country. It is shaped like the skin of a dead sheep.

Thakeli Makhesi

This view of the African nation Lesotho, and the others on this and the following pages have been submitted by VOLUNTEER correspondent Stephen Lehmann. Volunteer teachers took the pictures. Their students wrote the essays.

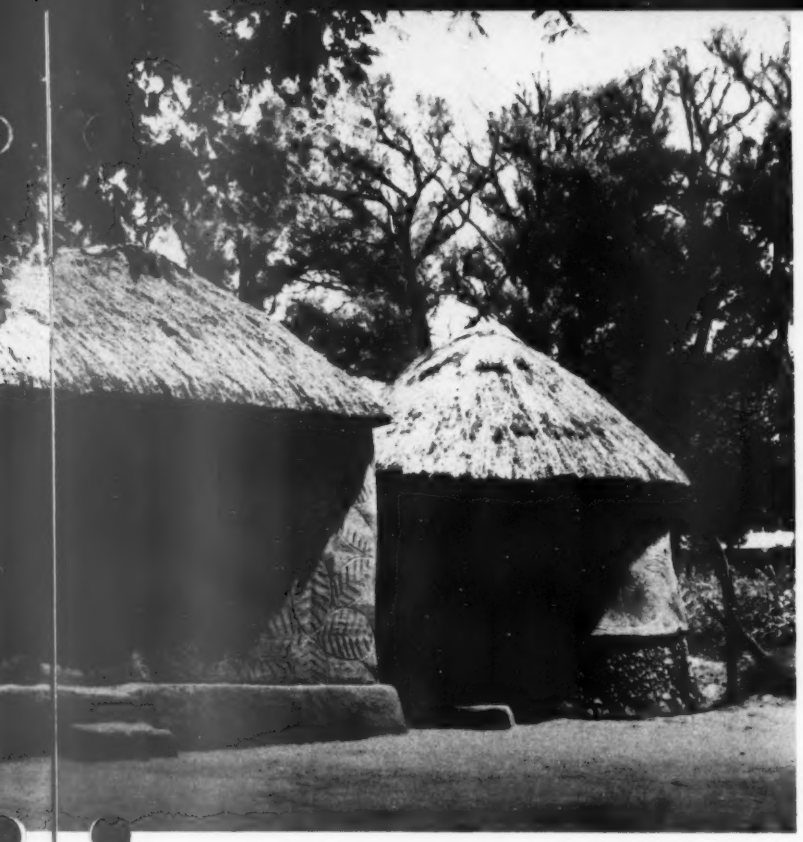
When you take the map of South Africa, you find a diamond-like shape and this is the country of Lesotho. It is a country of extreme altitude, with a beautiful range of mountains in the eastern part. These mountains are the source of big and small rivers which come down to the lowlands. There are very few trees in the highlands, mostly there are bushes and tall grass. It is a good place for the animals to dwell, especially wild ones and they still exist. This country demonstrates its beauty with the big rivers which flow from the highlands with continuously running water. These rivers run through rock between the hills by the side of the mountains like a pregnant cobra with its slow water.

Alphonse Semella

Here in Lesotho there are many different kinds of witch doctors. Some are concerned with problems while others do nothing. They all want to be known as doctors who can cure the illnesses of patients. But some doctors use their medicines to circumcise people, especially men. It is impossible for the owner of circumcision to tell everybody of the problems involved. It is only those who come from there who know these things. Other doctors do not even think of circumcision. They kill others with something like thunder. Many Basotho are killed by thunder, especially in summer. There are some doctors, however, who prevent and cure things.

—*Mokupo Tsamela*

"This is a witch doctor in Quthing District"



I have worked very much during this vacation. I have already smeared three huts, their walls and the grounds with black soil. I am getting prepared for smearing with the coloured soil. Towards the end of the week our huts will have yellow fronts. They will be well smeared and have drawing I have done. The drawing will be black because the first layer of soil is black and when my fingers dig on the wet yellow soil, the black shows through. I will be on this trouble-some work for a full two weeks.

—Yvonne Kuleile

"Hanging up dead birds is supposed to keep live ones from the crops."

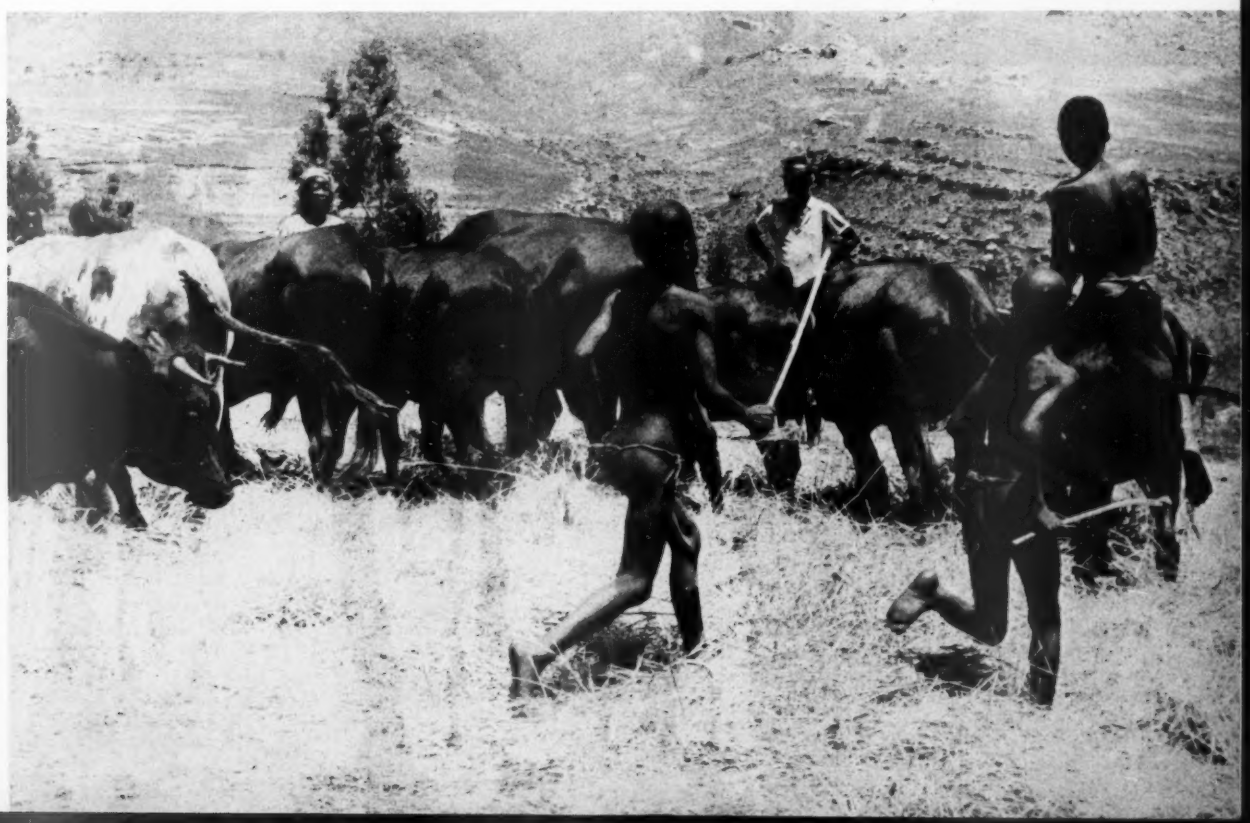
My friend is a handsome boy. He is very clever and he is a well-mannered boy. All people love him because of his manners. He does not fight against other boys or insult them; even if one insults him, he will do nothing. My friend plays with other boys carefully so that he may not hurt them. When he is at school, he plays football, races and does all the things that his teacher asks him to do. In class he does not sleep or play—the one thing he does is study. I think that everybody would be happy if he behaved like that boy. All the old people would be happy if their children were handsome like my friend.

—Alexander Kaibe

One day we went to the fields. We were a group of small girls dodging our parents. It was during winter when fields had been reaped. We met the little herd boys of our ages. We never agreed with the herd boys in any thought, and we used to fight with them. My friends never got lashed because they obeyed the commandments of the herd boys. If a boy drew a line on the ground and said, "No one should pass here unless she kisses me," they would all stop because they did not want to be hit. I crossed the line and told them I never knew a boy kissed. Then they all fell upon me and beat me with little sticks. After showing my father the wounds I got from the fight, he laughed at that time. Then I was asked how the fight happened and why it was that I left home without permission. It was indeed disappointing to be lashed, especially by father.

—*Yvonne Kuleile*

"We went to the fields . . . to tease the herd boys."



"My mother Lesotho . . . "

Photographs by—
Gary Bowne
Gary Buchfink
Nancy Fisher
Leslie Johnson
Stephen Lehmann
Mona Manson
Larry Roth
Ava Woolliscroft

Essays by students from—
Holy Family Secondary School
Sacred Heart High School
St. Stephen's High School

By JOHN SCHUMANN

Are Peace Corps language teachers **hung up on the oral approach?**

The history of teaching language in the Peace Corps—either to trainees or to host nationals through TEFL programs—has been based on one technique: the audio-lingual or "oral" approach. Through the years, staff and Volunteers have continued to have expectations for the audio-lingual method that are far beyond what it can alone produce.

Small classes and high intensity in terms of hours of exposure are essential elements that account for a large part of the success of the audio-lingual method. Peace Corps English teachers are usually faced with classes of at least 35 and often 50 to 60 pupils, meeting only 3 to 5 hours a week. There is good reason to believe that under such conditions a Peace Corps teacher, using the audio-lingual method, can be no more effective in terms of overall language skills taught than a host country teacher who employs the traditional translation method.

In Peace Corps training programs where trainees in language classes of usually 6 to 8 students receive 300 to 400 hours of language instruction, enhanced by such techniques as HILT (High Intensity Language Training) and total immersion, the validity of an audio-lingual approach is less questionable. The amount of time spent learning a second language is an essential factor in the eventual acquisition of that language. Nevertheless, timing and method are often confused. Audio-lingual methodology is often supported on the basis of the success it achieved in the Army language schools during and after World War II. But these courses lasted from nine months to a year and during that time the learner did nothing but study language. Nevertheless, there exists a tendency on the part of some Volunteers and staff to hope to reproduce in English classes overseas the success achieved in language instruction in Peace Corps training and other intensive, long-term programs.

When audio-lingual techniques were first developed, they met with such resistance that their practitioners were forced to take a hard-line stand in defense of the method. In order to make the pendulum begin to swing in a new direction, audio-lingual teachers often overstated their case and allowed the success achieved in special intensive programs to be thought possible even under usual classroom conditions where low intensity and large classes were the rule. The methodology itself largely originated with the linguistically oriented Intensive Language Program of the early 1940's. It was believed that language consisted of an aggregate of sensory and motor habits acquired through extensive drill of a finite stock of sentences in a relatively unthinking and mechanical manner. The semantic aspect of language was often subordinated.

According to experts

As Noam Chomsky points out in *Language and Mind*, ". . . the behavioristic period of linguistics . . . almost universally claimed that a person's knowledge is representable as a stored set of patterns, overlearned through constant repetition and detailed training with innovation being at most a matter of 'analogy.'" Robert Lado, Nelson Brooks, and Charles C. Fries in their works on language learning and teaching all maintained this same behavioristic point of view:

> Lado: ". . . knowing a language is defined as the power to use its complex mechanism through bundles of habits while only the thread of argument and some matters of selection and agreement are under attention."
>
> Brooks: "The single paramount fact about language learning is that it concerns, not problem solving but the formation and performance of habits."
>
> Fries: "A person has learned a foreign language when he...has... made the structural devices...matters of automatic habit."

However, the memorization and drill which is used to develop language habits often makes the manipulation of structures more difficult, and produces speech that is only superficially native-like. Native speakers do not memorize their language. Today we know that language learning involves the internalization of some finite system of rules, rather than simply the memorization of a fixed list of linguistic expressions.

Drills, the means by which language habits are supposedly formed, have themselves become suspect. It is felt that they in many ways only differ from conjugations and declensions in that the variation takes place within complete utterances. Pattern drills are indeed far from true communication. This fact is recognized by the audio-lingual habits theorists, but they go on to claim that the learner will be able to transfer the drills into real communication. There is no convincing evidence that this transfer actually occurs.

Wilma Rivers in her book, *The Psychologist and the Foreign Language Teacher*, has pointed out that emphasis on mechanical drill, instantaneous response and repetition is useful, but it can also have harmful effects. These techniques can easily induce habits of sheer mechanized action, as well as tendencies to perform slavishly instead of freely. She goes on to say that "in view of the fact that in most languages there is a variety of possible ways of expressing any one thing, too much 'overlearning,' as advocated by the audio-lingual sources, may fixate stereotyped responses and make it harder for the student, at a more advanced level, to develop flexibility in handling synonymous phrases and parallel constructions."

Contrastive analysis (the method by which the structures of two languages are compared) as a basis for drill construction is a major aspect of the audio-lingual method. But such analysis does not take into account

Volunteer Cooke Sunoo teaches English in a Seoul, Korea, middle school.

the level of language called "deep structure" which provides a particular pattern with its meaning. There is also a tendency for contrastive analysis to focus concern so strongly on the points of difference between two languages which create learning problems that the essential structure and system of the target language is sometimes ignored.

Choral repetition also fails to contribute to true communication. It often destroys natural intonation and rhythm. It becomes impossible for a teacher to detect errors when more than two or three people are responding at the same time. Students tend to lose respect for and interest in a language when it is not used as a personal means of expression. Unless choral work is conducted very carefully and very sparingly, students tend to decrease their efforts and to hide behind the confusion it creates.

The one experiment conducted to compare the effectiveness of audio-lingual vs. traditional methodology had rather disappointing results. It was carried out over a two-year period at the University of Colorado and was directed by a foreign language professor, George A. C. Scherer, and a psychologist, Michael Wertheimer. John B. Carroll reports in *Trends in Language Teaching*, "Random assignment of some 300 students to the two methods was used. Unfortunately, in the second year it was not possible to give the two groups differentiated instruction, but even so, at the end of this second year, the audio-lingual group was still slightly ahead in speaking ability. . . . The traditional group was slightly better in writing ability, but the two groups no longer differed at all in listening and reading. On the whole, the average differences between the groups were small, small enough at any rate to suggest that it does not make any material difference whether one uses the audio-lingual method as opposed to the traditional method. . . . The dramatic superiority that an ardent audio-lingual habit theorist might have predicted failed to appear."

New investigations into the nature of language and language acquisition indicate that the mind, in a very unique way, contributes to the language learning process and that language acquisition is not merely a result of a stimulus-response learning routine, but rather it is a result of the genetic tendency of the mind to learn language. A behavioristic methodology which stresses extensive pattern drills alone is insufficient to achieve fluency. It appears that the mind does not merely store the linguistic input it receives, but that it analyzes this input to discover a system of underlying

French language instructors and Guinea trainees practice audio-lingual skills in a simulated African market at the Virgin Islands training center.

grammatical regularities. From these regularities the mind forms rules or concepts which possess a recursive quality that enables it to generate all the sentences of a particular language, even totally unique sentences that the speaker has never heard.

Audio - lingual theory erroneously presupposes that language is merely a set of habits, and its methodology, which stems from this view, does not necessarily lead to the acquisition of generative rules. Today we are just beginning to discover what the nature of the mind's analyzing and rule-forming process is. A knowledge of the process is crucial to the structuring of language materials, and until it is better understood, language teaching methodology will remain in a kind of limbo where intensity, class size and quality of instruction (i.e., skill of the teacher) are the major variables with which we have to work. In the light of the above, it is recommended:

- that Peace Corps trainees be made aware of the limitations of the audio-lingual method and that it not be allowed to become dogma;
- that trainees be taught to apply *selectively* and realistically within the host country English training system the skills and techniques provided by the audio-lingual method;
- that close consideration be given to host country expectations and goals set for terminal language skills;
- that these host country expectations be the Peace Corps goals, and that Volunteers be encouraged to exceed these goals but not to ignore, by over-emphasizing oral work, the reading, writing and translation skills required by the host country;
- that Volunteers be familiar with the literature treating the relationship of reading to other skills, and have up-to-date information on the problems of teaching reading, vocabulary and writing English;
- that the acceptance by the host country English teachers of the audio-lingual method not be a goal of the Peace Corps TEFL program. The Volunteers in teacher training programs should not present audio-lingual methodology as a closed system. They should demonstrate only that certain techniques provided by the method are applicable to the host country English system;
- that TEFL methodology based on audio-lingual habit theory not be expected to impart an inductive technique that will remedy the host country's stress on rote learning;
- that Volunteers in TEFL should be made aware of the linguistic and learning theory problems involved in language teaching, and they should be conversant with research and experimentation going on in the field; credibility and contribution to eventual improvement will result.

Niger trainees undergo intensive oral study in a Virgin Islands language immersion class.

John Schumann has a master's degree in Russian literature and linguistics. He was a Peace Corps English teacher in Iran from 1966-1968, and also taught English as a Foreign Language in the 1968 summer program at Yale. Schumann is presently a Peace Corps Fellow, and in this role he has been serving as a TEFL specialist for the Office of Planning and Program Review and Research in Peace Corps Washington.

Reports from the task forces: **New directions charted**

After two weeks of deliberations, the 10 task forces appointed by Director Joe Blatchford to look at new directions for the Peace Corps (see June VOLUNTEER, "Eyeing changes in the Peace Corps"), met to compare notes and try out their ideas on each other. Then each group turned in a preliminary report of its study.

The combined reports have formed the basis of a memorandum on new directions which Blatchford sent to President Nixon in mid-June. The reports also form the groundwork for continued study throughout the summer.

THE VOLUNTEER has chosen key ideas from nine of the reports for presentation here. (Staff training in Washington, D. C. has been omitted.) The excerpts follow:

Attracting new types of Volunteers

The task force agreed that the common ground for entry into the Peace Corps should be the spirit of voluntarism. But it concluded that the Peace Corps must do more to promote participation by all sectors of our society. The group recommended that:

- The Peace Corps must eliminate, amend or replace all those intimidating elements—such as 15-page applications, multiple reference forms, and highly intellectualized media appeals—which now tend to subtly communicate to the trade-skilled or ethnic group individual that he is neither wanted nor needed in the Peace Corps.
- Field staff should explore the program needs and the implications of including more skilled workers, farmers, experienced teachers, executives, retired people and others in the Peace Corps, recognizing that such people may require resources and staff support of a different nature from generalists.
- The Peace Corps should try to place more qualified married applicants who are without dependents. The Peace Corps should place married couples with dependents overseas *only* on a cautious, pilot basis with mechanisms for evaluation built into the program. Pilot programs for urban school drop-outs and rural farm youth should also be considered.
- To allow skilled people with family and job responsibilities to serve as Volunteers, Peace Corps must be willing to increase allowances. The Peace Corps also must be willing to expand post-service job and educational opportunities through appropriate partnerships with universities and industry.

Technical assistance and Peace Corps programming

The group took up the problem of how the Peace Corps could increase its technical assistance and direct it more effectively toward development. It cautioned that a "move toward new program opportunities and a more effective Peace Corps response will require careful planning, provision of resources and delicate adjustments and timing." Some areas in which the group said the Peace Corps could give increased assistance include:

- Actual development planning and programming, including such sectors as agriculture, manpower development, education and skill training, industrial and small business development.
- The transmission of technology and scientific knowledge.
- Concentration of force on one or a few major world problems, such as urban migration, population, nutrition, conservation, and the eradication or control of disease.
- Limited financing for program-related equipment and seed money for small activity with cooperatives.

Other conclusions were that the Peace Corps must take program development suggestions from all sources, including national planning agencies, private groups, individuals in the host country. It should take more account of technical support resources (human, fiscal and material) available in the host country. And it should hire staff with development training and orientation as well as staff with technical and professional competence.

The group noted that the Peace Corps could also recruit more skilled and technically competent Volunteers. But there would be costs as well as benefits in a major shift to specialists. Training may be just as expensive, or even more costly; while the need for giving such trainees technical studies might logically decrease, the language

and cross-cultural segments may have to be increased to reach older groups with lower verbal aptitudes.

Binationalism

The task force studied binationalism as a methodology with regard to all aspects of the Peace Corps: planning and programming, recruiting, training, selection and overseas operations. The group called for a larger role for host nationals in all areas, with a general strengthening of decision making in the field. It suggested ways of easing integration of U.S. and host staff (some hiring practices and the classification of certain information are now considered obstacles in this area).

Concerning overseas operations, the task force noted:

"The spirit of binationalism requires that the Peace Corps as a government agency deal only with other governments or their agencies. This would mean that requests from non-governmental agencies must be made to the Peace Corps staff in country through the host government's institutions."

The task force also prompted the Peace Corps to rethink its role of technical support, extending it to host nationals as well as Volunteers.

The committee concluded that "multi-nationalism can only spring from the soil of binationalism. All proposals for multi-national projects must be initiated, controlled and supervised by the host country governments with which we work."

Internationalism and multi-nationalism

The task force concluded that, under most circumstances, the present national structure of the Peace Corps would continue to serve best the interest of the host countries, the United States, and the Volunteers.

However, the group noted that advantages and disadvantages could accrue from international and multinational programming of Volunteers. It stated that, in light of political sensitivities in some host countries and the desire of many to use voluntarism to strengthen internationalism and international organizations, the Peace Corps should have a positive attitude towards international and multinational programming. Only in this way would future, long-range decisions be reached on the value of international and multi-national programming as development tools.

The task force recommended that the Peace Corps support efforts at this time to develop international volunteer organizations and discuss with international bodies means by which Peace Corps Volunteers could participate in projects with other volunteers in programs of host countries.

Host Country Peace Corps and voluntarism

The group felt the Peace Corps must recognize host country sensitivities toward a U.S. presence, growing nationalism and ideals of self-determination in developing countries, and encourage positive development of domestic volunteer programs. Their recommendations include:

- The Peace Corps Office of National Voluntary Service Programs should link with private organizations and individuals to support national volunteer programs abroad and provide technical assistance in establishing and expanding them.
- The Peace Corps should provide Volunteers to work under the supervision of counterpart host agencies and consider contractual arrangements with its counterpart agencies for the training of Peace Corps Volunteers in country.
- The Peace Corps should encourage host nationals interested in domestic voluntary programs to visit the U.S. for short-term technical training, under existing U.S. government programs.
- Upon request, the Peace Corps should participate in studies of the possibilities of establishing domestic volunteer agencies in other countries.

Reverse Peace Corps

The task force was most enthusiastic about the Volunteers to America (VTA) program currently administered by the State Department.

Among their recommendations:

- The VTA program should be transferred to the Peace Corps as soon as possible and should be the model for the "Reverse Peace Corps" program.
- The number of Volunteers to America should be significantly increased as soon as possible.
- The primary purposes of the VTA program should continue to be:
  - —To provide America with needed skills, experience and viewpoints.
  - —To provide Volunteers with experience that will be of continuing value to themselves and their countries.
  - —To enhance mutual understanding among peoples, cultures and nations.
  - —To promote, in America and in the countries from which Volunteers come to America, the concept of voluntary service as a developmental and educational tool.

While no country or area should be excluded from consideration as a possible source of Volunteers to America, emphasis should be given to obtaining Volunteers from countries which employ Peace Corps Volunteers, the group said. It also called for further study on how the Peace Corps could most appropriately administer the Volunteers to America program within the United States, particularly with respect to the assignment and support of the Volunteers.

Combined volunteer service

The group cited the following advantages for combining already existing voluntary groups such as Peace Corps, VISTA and the Teacher Corps: more exciting recruiting, better selection, better training, more efficient and lower-cost administration, better and wider-range utilization of skills, a widened scope of motivation to include more than one problem area.

The members proposed a series of models of combined service, and suggested the President issue a call for combined service and initiate the coordinating machinery necessary to handle the response. Some of the models are:

- *Combined service in volunteer agencies based upon skill specialty.* One example—conservation skills would be developed in a training program and used both in VISTA on programs in a national park in the U.S., then in the Peace Corps in a conservation program in East Africa.
- *Combined service based upon integration of service with formal education program.* A five-year undergraduate course with three years at the educational institution and two years in the Peace Corps.
- *Teaching as the central theme.* A combination of Peace Corps and Teacher Corps service.

Returned Volunteers in the U.S.

About 800 returned Volunteers (RPCVs) in six cities talked about

the Peace Corps and the pros and cons of Peace Corps involvement with former Volunteers. The following proposals were among those considered:

- Ways to assist the transition from Volunteer to returned Volunteer, like a "Center for Transitional Services" and a "Regional Training Center," providing career assistance, information and perspective about domestic involvement.
- RPCV participation on the Peace Corps National Advisory Council, the group of prominent persons from all walks of life which meets twice yearly to advise the Peace Corps on policy.
- A fellowship program for RPCVs working in social action through government agencies, social organizations, or the like.
- A regional clearinghouse of information on the whereabouts and activities of RPCVs, in addition to employment and counselling services.
- A "Peace Corps Reader" about returned Volunteers.

National service as an alternative to the draft

The group concluded that the concept of national service as an alternative to the draft should be studied by a Presidential commission. Meanwhile, assuming that voluntary national service would continue to exist as it does today (the Peace Corps, VISTA and the Teacher Corps), they suggested:

- If the present draft system remains in effect, the President should declare the Peace Corps, VISTA and the Teacher Corps (and other such voluntary programs as he determines appropriate) to be in the national interest. The acceptance of a registrant to any of these programs should entitle him to a deferment during his service.
- If the present draft system is altered to draft the youngest first, the President should emphasize the need and importance of voluntary service by persons who are not called to serve in the military. All but hardship deferments should be eliminated, *or* a clear-cut deferment for voluntary service programs should be established.
- If the present shooting war continues, non-military service should not be equated with military service. This would seriously undermine the voluntary nature of these service programs and inevitably result in unfairly exempting college educated registrants at the expense of the less advantaged.

Columnists retract ACCION charge

Washington columnists Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson have retracted their recent charge that ACCION, formerly headed by Peace Corps Director Joe Blatchford, had accepted money from two Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) fronts.

In their syndicated column on May 23, they implied that because of the alleged CIA financing of ACCION and Blatchford's recent appointment as Peace Corps director, the traditional separation between the Peace Corps and the CIA was being relaxed. Pearson and Anderson also said that the original Peace Corps director, Sargent Shriver, issued orders in 1962 to Latin America country directors not to associate with anyone from ACCION, a private development program, because it was operating with the guidance of the CIA. The columnists named a Donner Foundation and a Free Labor Committee as the CIA fronts which made contributions to ACCION.

Blatchford was returning from his overseas trip when the column appeared. Within a few days he wired a statement to all Peace Corps posts and answered some 50 Washington staff members who had signed a letter asking the director to "do whatever is necessary to dispel even the spectre of CIA involvement in the Peace Corps." The staff members noted that the column "is read by more people than the Record of Congressional Hearings" where Blatchford, during his confirmation hearings, already had stressed that Peace Corps should continue its relative autonomy from the State Department and its complete separation from the CIA.

Blatchford replied that he and ACCION had never had any association whatever with the CIA or any other intelligence agency or operation. He said he has been assured by Shriver and by past director Jack Vaughn that the allegation of the 1962 order for Peace Corps to avoid contact with ACCION was groundless. Additionally, he said that finances of the Donner Foundation which contributed to ACCION are a matter of public record and "there has never been a single fact produced to suggest that it has received funds from the CIA."

Blatchford said he did not know of the Free Labor Committee to which Pearson and Anderson referred and suggested they may have meant the AFL-CIO's American Institute of Free Labor Development which is heavily funded by AID. "But that group never gave assistance to ACCION either directly or indirectly," the director stated.

By May 31, Pearson and Anderson admitted in their column that they had been in error the previous week. "The inference," they said, "was based principally on the fact that ACCION, founded by the new head of the Peace Corps, Joe Blatchford, in South America had received $50,000 from the Donner Foundation, a reported CIA conduit. We now find that there are two Donner Foundations and that the William H. Donner Foundation, which contributed to ACCION, has never been a CIA conduit. We regret the error and further state that we are convinced the Peace Corps has no connection, direct or indirect, with the CIA."

Blatchford said it was "tragic that such a story should gain currency under a sensationalized headline. My concern is not for myself but for the possible danger this may do to the ability of 10,000 Volunteers throughout the world to be of service."

Also in his follow-up statements, Blatchford amplified the Peace Corps policies which relate to intelligence activity.

"One of these policies," he said "has been a recognition of the distinctiveness of Peace Corps as a government agency working overseas. Thus, as Secretary of State William Rogers recently cabled to all posts: 'President Nixon and I have determined that the twin goals of service and mutual understanding can best be served if the Peace Corps continues to remain strictly nonpolitical. Thus, Volunteers are not to be regarded as official members of the mission and neither Volunteers

nor Peace Corps staff members are to be associated in any way with any intelligence activities.'

"The history of the policy reaffirmed by the Secretary of State began with President Kennedy," Blatchford continued. "On setting up the Peace Corps President Kennedy gave explicit instructions to the CIA not to make contact in any way with staff or Volunteers.

"To implement the rule of strict separation, the Peace Corps adopted as a policy a prohibition on the employment as staff or enrollment as a Volunteer of any person previously employed by or otherwise connected with the CIA. And, as a corollary to this policy, the CIA agreed that it would not hire any Peace Corps Volunteers or staff members until four years after the completion of service. Similar agreements have been made by other civilian and military intelligence operations.

"This is the extent of the official policy between the White House and the Peace Corps Director. This is agreed to and understood by the Congress, State Department and the CIA. I want to make it absolutely clear that this policy will remain in effect," said Blatchford.

Houser – *No. 2 in Peace Corps*

Thomas J. Houser, a Chicago lawyer and former campaign manager for Senator Charles Percy of Illinois, has been named number two man in the Peace Corps as deputy under Director Joe Blatchford.

He succeeds Brent Ashabranner, who has been with the Peace Corps since its earliest days when he developed the first program in Nigeria.

Houser, 40, appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee June 3 and was endorsed by Sen. Percy and by former Illinois Congressman Don Rumsfeld, now director of the Office of Economic Opportunity. His appointment was confirmed by the Senate June 12, and he was sworn into office by Vice President Spiro Agnew June 23.

The new deputy, an Army veteran, has a bachelor's degree from Hanover College in Indiana and a law degree from Northwestern University. He managed Sen. Percy's election campaign from March through November of 1966, then stayed on as special counsel. More recently, he has been associated with the Leibman, Williams, Bennett, Baird and Minow law firm of Chicago. Houser is married and has three children.

Ashabranner has managed the day-to-day Peace Corps operations since the leadership changed hands from Jack Vaughn to Blatchford. From 1962 to 1966, Ashabranner was deputy and then director of the program in India. He later headed the Office of Training in Washington before being named deputy under Jack Vaughn in September, 1967.

Houser

Ashabranner will assist Houser until mid-July when, at the director's request, he will travel to Africa and Asia to report on certain aspects of the Peace Corps which have interested him during his long service.

Then retired from Peace Corps, Ashabranner, who has published more than 100 short stories and articles, will write an informal history of the Peace Corps' first decade. Doubleday expects to publish it in the fall of 1970, ten years after President John Kennedy first enunciated his hopes for such a movement in a speech at the University of Michigan.

"Beyond that, I can only say that I may return overseas in some kind of development work," Ashabranner concluded.

Letters *to the Volunteer*

Our first priority

To THE VOLUNTEER:

May I suggest that the irregular reader of THE VOLUNTEER who wrote "Cold Peace Corps hash" (March VOLUNTEER) had not been missing much despite irregular reading habits. I would even hazard to guess that the ratio of irregular to regular readers of THE VOLUNTEER is larger than one to one.

If irrelevancy—well-worn phrases, remote paragraphs—is the cause of it all, the "press-on reformers" may truly be at fault. But I doubt that they can help themselves.

A magazine which apparently has so many first priority uses—a vent for staff ideas, a showboard directed toward Congress—can hardly hope to see Volunteers talking effectively to each other on its pages.

If THE VOLUNTEER wants to serve Volunteers as a first priority item, it will have to change its policies radically. Possibly the most important and needed change in policy would require that contributions to THE VOLUNTEER—articles, comments and pictures— be accepted only from Volunteers themselves. If enacted, this would immediately change the tone of the publication. If Volunteers are to talk to each other, the common voice through which they speak must have no overpowering commitment to higher authorities, no conflict of interest, and no other purpose but to serve Volunteers.

CHUCK CHANDLER

Syanjga, Nepal

A universal language?

To THE VOLUNTEER:

I concur with Miss Jacobson's dismay (March VOLUNTEER) over the time and energy expended by Peace Corps personnel in searching for new formulas to insure success. At the same time, Miss Jacobson comes uncomfortably close to this same kind of search in her appeal for "some way in

which we can speak to each other that would be helpful in clarifying our own experiences and perhaps assist those who wish to make the Peace Corps more effective."

The implication is that she is searching for some common language which Volunteers can use to articulate their experiences which would crystallize them in the minds of fellow Volunteers. I don't believe this universal language exists.

As has been said innumerable times before, no two Peace Corps experiences are alike. No two Volunteers, even if they are stationed in the same town, will react or experience identically. Even seemingly universal Peace Corps experiences differ among countries and within countries. This is most immediately, if not most vividly, illustrated by the "servant dialogue" which has been taking place in THE VOLUNTEER for the past few months. I think it illustrates that even the merits and liabilities of having or not having a houseboy will vary with cultural setting, not to mention the Volunteer's job, personality and skills.

If any generalization can be made, it would have to be that there are no universal rules. If there is a single rule or formula for success in Peace Corps service, it would be that the Volunteer should be flexible, be sensitive and be wary of pre-packaged success formulas. Peace Corps is people and the number of possible success formulas is at least equal to the number of Peace Corps Volunteers, past, present and future.

LOUISE P. REICH

Suakoko, Liberia

'Plain English'

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

The letter of Christine Jacobson (March VOLUNTEER) touches a notable point. Too many "good" Americans conclude that foreigners are stupid and hard of hearing because no matter how loud they yell, some foreigners just can't understand "plain English."

Immediately above Miss Jacobson's letter appeared one which illustrated the point. There is the phrase . . . "my attempts at achieving a closer rapport with my villagers were flaunted."

Ah, if we would only study to know our own tongue and perhaps a little of someone else's. How close can rapport be? How did this writer come to possess villagers he couldn't get close to? Perhaps his attempts were flaunted, that is, showily displayed.

Why not simply try to be friendly? Surely villagers anywhere need no alien possessors, not even affluent, college-educated, sublimely illiterate Americans.

CHARLES ETHERIDGE

Charleston, W. Va.

Start listening

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

The greatest indication I've seen that things in the Peace Corps haven't changed is the thorough consistency of THE VOLUNTEER magazine. I gurgled in ecstacy as I opened the past few issues and saw two articles on discovering fire, three on inventing the wheel, and seven letters to the editor concerning perhaps the most controversial and important discussion that has ever occurred in Peace Corps annals, and also the most enduring: Should Volunteers have refrigerators?

Outstanding in the articles, with unerring inconsistency, was the discussion of what a volunteer program should really be. The first such article was written in 1775, as the colonial rebels tried to figure out how to set up the minutemen, and the discussion has remained basically the same ever since. I absolutely had shivers going up and down my spine as I read a professional staff member giving his views on how all the good of the volunteer program is being ruined by placing Volunteers into structured situations. As a professional staff member (similar to a professional student, except he opinionates more often), this gentleman felt that the only way a Volunteer could be truly a Volunteer was by volunteering through a voluntary volunteer program . . . which is an unstructured way of saying he didn't like all this structuring that he feels has arrived on the scene. He wants Volunteers to be "individuals," and God help them if they can't be his kind of individual.

The most delightful part of this dissertation was the examples used. With utter aplomb, the foremost case of an individual Volunteer being effective in a non-structured situation was that of a teacher working with students. I must admit it did my old heart good to realize that things haven't changed since I was in the good old Peace Corps . . . staff still doesn't know what it's talking about!

Really, this is vital to the effectiveness of the program. Where would Volunteers be if the staff really knew what they were doing? Who could you gripe about? How else could you extend a three-year project into infinity? What would you talk about in bull sessions in which the beer is supplied by unknowing staff members? Keep them ignorant, I say, or the whole organization might fold!

Seriously, and without cynicism being pervasive for a moment, I find the fact that staff are still thinking about "unstructured" planning an abomination. To recognize that truly effective and efficient programming calls for capability to change . . . that no Volunteer must be kept in a situation he is incapable of handling or is stagnating in . . . that outlets to go beyond the realm of planned programming must be made for the creative and understanding person . . . is vital to the success of the program. To call for a two-year sensitivity session is something quite different.

One of the greatest problems in communication between staff and Volunteers has been, and apparently still is, the fact that staff members insist on airing their views of what Volunteers should be. Since every staff member has his own pet "hang-up," this has become an eight-year seminar in futility, with a two-year cyclical transition period, whatever that may mean.

Christine Jacobson wrote a letter (March VOLUNTEER) which might have been written two years ago, or five years ago, and which will probably be written in a different form twenty years hence. It is the plea eternal of Volunteers to staff people—stop giving your views on esoteric phenomena and just do your job.

Or, to put it more succinctly, *stop talking*, and *start listening*. The Volunteers will handle the problems of what they are supposed to be if you just give them the guidance and assistance they need.

DENNIS NOLAN

Daly City, Calif.

'An inner journey'

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

It was refreshing to read Christine Jacobson's letter (March VOLUNTEER). The flashes of insight which appear in THE VOLUNTEER, in such local publications as *India Digest*, the papers I receive from my directors both in New Delhi and Washington, D.C., have nothing to do at all with people living

in District Ferozepur, Indian or American.

Peace Corps literature takes an inner journey, but it is an inner journey through the clauses of Public Law 87-293, and not through the deeper channels of men's hearts and thoughts. The Peace Corps claims to be concerned about reaching the individual, but the Corps is too wrapped up in trying to understand its own philosophy as set down in the Peace Corps Act several years ago, a philosophy which encompasses too small a part of the thoughts of a very few people coming from an affluent society on the North American continent to ever really reach any individual, including itself.

The Corps is not concerned about individuals because it makes no great effort to go beyond itself to understand men of Indian culture, even men of American culture. The Peace Corps has become a group interested mainly in analyzing itself and justifying itself, and in so doing fails to account for the sensibilities of people whose philosophies are more than the ideals stated in Section 2 of Public Law 87-293. For example: I have been told that as a Peace Corps Volunteer in India, I am an "agent of change" which both sounds like a character from a Saturday night television program and supports Lillian Hellman's comment: "There's nothing to be despairing about except the American liberal". A bold comment to make for anyone in the Peace Corps in a culture which has been in existence long before the year 1961 A.D. (I am, of course, using the Christian calendar; there is another).

The Peace Corps vocabulary of "Volunteer experience," "change," "progress," and "efficacy" impresses upon the mind a picture of one-dimensional people living in shallow societies and does not account for the individuality and sensibilities of any man in any culture.

I share with you, Christine, not only the feeling that the Peace Corps misses "something far more important going on outside," but something important inside as well.

RICHARD GRADY

A volunteer staff

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

While working as a rural Volunteer, I never encountered much staff criticism. Whenever in the capital city,

Memorandum

TO : The field DATE: July, 1969
FROM : The editors
SUBJECT: Number 2 men get together

When Vice President Spiro Agnew came to Peace Corps headquarters to swear in the new deputy director, Thomas Houser, he mentioned he also had intended to talk with trainees headed for Malawi. He had to cut that out of his schedule but said he already had gotten some background information on Malawi from the encyclopedia. "It wasn't Malawi's size or population or natural resources which caught my attention," Agnew said, "but the fact that in their political system there is no vice president. I immediately got a very high regard for Malawi."

□ □ □

At least 15 returned Volunteers responded to the following ad in Career Information Service's recent "Hotline" sheet: "GOVERNESS—full-time, live-in, to care for many children between the ages of four months and 18 years. Family resides near Washington, D. C., and spends part of the year at summer and winter locations. Position is for at least one year. Applicants should be completely reliable, have had experience with children and have lots of energy. Family is very close, active and sports-minded. Salary approximately $100 a week plus room and board. Sunday and Monday off every other week. Tuesday off on alternate weeks." Those who applied discovered "the active, sports-minded family" is that of Mrs. Ethel Kennedy at Hickory Hill in McLean, Va. At press time, several candidates were under consideration.

□ □ □

In April we carried a story by Volunteer Michael Patton who applied for School Partnership funds on behalf of the village of Namoungou, Upper Volta. The request was matched with $1000 from Fox Lane Middle School in Bedford Village, N.Y. In the application, Mike said: "Just as I had to tell the people of Namoungou that they might not get the materials to build their school, so I must tell you that even if you send those materials, the school might not get built . . . there is a risk. But I believe it's a risk worth taking, just as the men of Namoungou are taking a risk in having their sons educated." Recently Mike has sent pictures of the school construction. It is very near completion, as seen to the left in the accompanying photo. Meanwhile, Pascal, the schoolmaster (at the left of the blackboard), keeps the students' attention in classes outdoors.

I was too preoccupied with my errands to pay any attention to the topic on the minds of so many frustrated Volunteers.

However, over the past year I have been appointed this region's agricultural coordinator. This job has not only brought me in contact with city Volunteers when working in the regional office, but has allowed me the opportunity to know many rural Volunteers during site visits. In my new position, I am frequently bombarded with Volunteer criticism of the staff, regional as well as national. Even with the change of regional directors, the roar of discontent continues to be heard.

I would like to suggest that as long as the Peace Corps remains the property of the U.S. government that staff be made Volunteers. This could help greatly to alleviate much of the criticism of staff by placing them on a more equal basis with the Volunteer. The staff member might then better understand the Volunteer's position. Also, the similarity behind the reasoning for joining the Peace Corps might lessen the Volunteers' suspicion that staff are "yes men" to their superiors, fearing their careers may be endangered for not carrying out U.S. foreign policy.

Under the voluntary position, staff members would receive a living allowance comparable to that of their host country counterparts. Should one have fixed Stateside expenses, such as older children attending U.S. colleges etc., then the Peace Corps would cover the costs. Also a justifiable readjustment allowance would be arranged according to the staff member's previous economic position before entering the Peace Corps.

I do not believe the above conditions would inhibit dedicated, experienced manpower from entering administrative positions in the Peace Corps. The post of staff with its volunteer nature might bring back memories for a few as well as help to bridge the Volunteer-staff gap. Of course, it follows that staff members who wish to terminate before finishing their two years of service and who do not have reasons "beneficial to the Peace Corps" will pay their own way home.

CHRISTOPHER BUNN

Antioquia, Colombia

Keeping up with inflation

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

It is no news that since March 1, 1961, when Peace Corps was inaugurated, the cost of living has risen. I trust that the amount settled upon for our monthly readjustment allowance at that time was made after a careful consideration of present-day needs and prices. It was adequate. However now, more than eight years later, the needs may not have changed but the prices certainly have.

With 37.4 per cent of terminating Volunteers continuing their education, this is a valid field of study for our purposes. The price of tuition for nearly all colleges and universities has more than doubled in any area of the United States since 1961. Book prices likewise have risen to astounding heights in the last eight years. The college I attended has raised its tuition 122 per cent since 1961; a comparative check of book prices shows an average rise of 73 per cent.

I believe it is time for re-evaluation. The adjustment allowance granted in 1961 was based on the economic scale then. I submit that it is time to update this allowance to present-day economic standards.

MICHAEL SARKA

Jaban, Iran

Editor's Note: Brian Johnson, Chief of Volunteer Finance, makes this response: The original Peace Corps bill as submitted to Congress in 1961 left the amount of the readjustment allowance (then called termination payment) to the President's discretion. However, Congress wrote the $75 maximum into the bill.

So far as we can determine, the $75 limitation was not based upon a study of living costs in the United States at that time. Indeed, there is no evidence that consideration was given to the specific kinds of readjustment costs the allowance was intended to cover. The original Executive Branch presentation to Congress stated only that the allowance would "assist Volunteers during the period of transition back to life at home in the United States." Similarly, the House Foreign Affairs Committee's report on the original Peace Corps bill stated that "the payment would assist returned Volunteers in finding jobs or otherwise re-establishing themselves in the United States."

Whatever costs the readjustment allowance was originally intended to cover are obviously much greater today. Because of this fact, active consideration is being given by the Peace Corps to requesting authority to increase the allowance. Such an increase would require both an amendment to the Peace Corps Act and an increased Peace Corps appropriation. (The approximate annual cost of an increase to, say, $100 per month would be $3.5 million.)

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